

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CONAKRY 1413

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PINS PFOR PINT GV US UR

SUBJECT: RETURN OF TU-95'S TO GUINEA

REF: CONAKRY 1412

1. SUMMARY. ACCORDING TO USUALLY RELIABLE GOG SOURCE ON AUGUST 10, LATEST TU-95 LANDINGS WERE RESULT OF BUREAUCRATIC BUNGLER. PRESIDENT TOURE WAS NOT INFORMED BEFOREHAND; HE HAS TAKEN MEASURES AGAINST FURTHER LANDINGS. PRESIDENT SUSPECTS RUSSIANS MAY HAVE DELIBERATELY PROVOKED INCIDENT. SOURCE'S ACCOUNT ROUGHLY CONSISTENT LESS DETAILED EXPLANATION PROVIDED TO CHARGE BY PRESIDENT TOURE (REFTEL). END SUMMARY.

2. ACCORDING TO KEY AIDE OF MINISTER OF INTERIOR DOMAIN MOUSSA DIAKITE (TO WHOM PRESIDENT TOURE CONFIDED INVESTIGATION), REAPPEARANCE OF TU-95'S WAS "INADVERTENT ERROR." SOVIETS CAME TO AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF ABDOURAHAMANE KABA AT AIRPORT ON AUGUST 5, WITH URGENT REQUEST FOR TWO TU-95'S TO LAND, REFUEL, AND GO ON TO LUANDA. KABA CAUGHT
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PRIME MINISTER VEAVOGUI BOARDING FLIGHT TO LUANDA AND ASKED HIM WHAT HE SHOULD DO IN VIEW OF GOG DECISION NOT TO LET TU-95'S LAND ANY MORE. BEAVOGUI, PRESSED FOR TIME, MERELY REFERRED HIM TO MFA. FONMIN FIFY CISSOKO ADVISED KABA TO HAVE SOVIETS SUBMIT DIPLOMATIC NOTE, WHICH WAS DONE ALMOST IMMEDIATELY. MFA SECRETARY GENERAL MOROU BALDE THEN

APPROVED REQUEST IN WRITING. (SOURCE CLAIMED BOTH CISSOKO AND BALDE KNEW OF PRESIDENT'S INSTRUCTIONS TO CONTRARY BUT DEFENDED THEMSELVES LATER AS HAVING "MISUNDERSTOOD" DECISION AS NOT APPLYING TO INNOCUOUS TRANSIT-FUELING STOPS.) KABA THEN CHECKED WITH MINISTER OF TRANSPORT WHO, SEEING MFA'S AUTHORIZATION, OFFERED NO OBJECTION.

3. WEATHER WAS STORMY WHEN TU-95'S CAME IN ON AUGUST 6. FIRST LANDED SAFELY BUT SECOND HIT RUNWAY HARD AND OVERSHOT, GOING BEYOND CONCRETE AND DAMAGING LANDING GEAR AND UNDERCARRIAGE. (AS OF AUGUST 11, PLANE IS STILL OBSERVABLY BEING REPAIRED AT AIRPORT BY RUSSIAN TECHNICIANS, AND TWO AN-12'S ARRIVED AS SUPPORT.)

4. AROUND 1300 ON AUGUST 6 AIRPORT COMMISSAR BAH INFORMED MOUSSA DIAKITE THAT TU-95'S LANDED. MOUSSA DIAKITE REFERRED HIM TO PRESIDENT TOURE. TOURE WAS FURIOUS. HE CONVOKED KABA PLUS DIRECTOR OF AIR GUINEE THEN ALL OFFICIALS CONCERNED. HE BLAMED CISSOKO AND BALDE AND DECLARED, "WE ALL AGREED, YOU KNEW THE POLICY." INVESTIGATION IS PROCEEDING. TOURE WILL "SEVERELY SANCTION" BALDE AND PERHAPS CISSOKO. PRESIDENT HAS ALSO ALLEGEDLY BEGUN TALKING DARKLY IN TERMS OF "THE PLOT CONTINUES" -- AS IF SOVIETS MAY HAVE DELIBERATELY STAGED LANDINGS, POSSIBLY WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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COMPLICITY OF INDIVIDUAL GUINEANS, TO DISRUPT IMPROVEMENT IN U.S. -GUINEAN RELATIONS. PRESIDENT TOURE GAVE SOVIETS 24 HOURS TO GET PLANE OUT OF GUINEA, BUT SOVIETS CLAIM A WEEK OR MORE WILL BE NECESSARY TO MAKE REPAIRS.

5. SOURCE ADMITTED ALL THIS MIGHT SEEM WILDLY IMPROBABLE TO AMERICAN OBSERVERS BUT "THAT'S GUINEA." HE SAID DIAKITE HAD ASKED HIM TO MAKE FULL REPORT TO CHARGE IN ORDER TO AVOID U.S. MISPERCEPTION OF INCIDENT. SOURCE INSISTED THAT IF ANOTHER TU-95 LANDED, IT WOULD BE "SOVIET PROVOCATION" AND HANDLED ASSUCH. MAINLAND

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